278
[563] The Chinese druggists, many of whom stocked among their traditional pharmacopeia a few modern medications, gave out occasionally to their customers information derived from the manufacturer's instructions for use. People with minor indispositions sometimes sought a druggist's advice. He suggested traditional or modern remedies, depending on the wishes of the customer. Thus, the druggists also acted as a bridge to the use of modern remedies.

484 Facets of Social Life Pertinent to Childbearing:

Communication and Transportation

People went to Minburi, and less often to Bangkok, to buy, sell, work, or visit relatives. A few adults had never been outside Bang Chan.

494 Along the road buses passed Bang Chan every two or three
[484] hours during the daytime only. Minburi was a ten minute
[206] ride, Bangkok, an hour. Minburi had no taxis, and no telephone
[493] existed to call a taxi from Bangkok. Two or three persons owned bicycles.

•505 Within Bang Chan, transportation varied with the season.
484 From June to February travel was entirely by boat, even to a neighbor. A message to a local midwife, for instance, could be carried quickly by a speedy paddler in his skiff. If an emergency trip to the Minburi Health Center appeared necessary, a person could be rowed fairly comfortably along the canal that bordered the road. Going by boat to Bangkok, a whole day's row away, or four hours by the motor boat from Minburi, was not considered convenient even for passenger traffic, much less for a sick person or a woman in labor.

484 The inconvenient time of year was the three month dry
844 season. Boats then could hardly go on the canal that ran through
[494] the middle of Bang Chan, while the smaller canals became muddy or even dry. Walking barefoot over sharp stubble in tropical sun was hard. To transport a woman in labor, assuming she could stand it, an improvised stretcher could be made, but to subject her to the jolting bus was usually foolhardy. It was not customary to flag down passing cars. If things went wrong for a woman in labor during the hot, dry season, there was practically no chance of getting her to a hospital, and none of getting modern help to her.

243 Work Habits in the Economy
433 Because of the annual flood the land was admirably suited to growing a single bounteous crop of rice. After all needs for

food, seed, and chicken feed were met, 58 per cent of the crop remained to be sold off for cash (Janlekha 1955:53). Almost every inhabitant was engaged in commercial rice farming. A few teachers, craftsmen, and traders, alone did not farm. Plantings of early and late varieties in different plots spread the toil. Cooperative work or some local hired help assured adequate labor forces at the needed moment. Nevertheless, two heavy work seasons dominated the rice cycle. The first of these, June through August, involved soil preparation and transplanting of the seedlings in long straight rows. In the second season, November into February, the rice was harvested, brought home for threshing and winnowing, then sold or stored. The straw was stacked as buffalo feed. People were anxious during the preparatory and planting season, for rains were fickle and the planning and timing had to be exact. Work was hard and almost grim. Harvest, though perhaps more of a physical strain because people cut the stalks by day, then threshed and winnowed far into the night, was gay and so less taxing emotionally, for the crop had safely passed through the threats of flood, drought, and pest, and "cash was in sight." Haste was necessary because each plot of rice had to be harvested within three or four days of its maturity, and because at that season the canals were drying up rapidly, raising the possibility not only that human backs and not boats would move the crop, but that the buyers themselves could not get their boats in to take the main portion to the urban markets. Then a farmer might have to wait until the canals filled again in June to sell his rice and get his money. Since during the busy seasons everyone from age 16 on up was taken up with farming, the cooking, child care, and other chores were carried on by the aged and the very young. These work days taxed to the limit the strength of all men, women, and even young people. Ten to 18 hours might be spent stooping to transplant or weed, or, at harvest, to cut the rice stalk close to the ground. There was a great deal of heavy lifting of seedling bundles or sheaves. The few professional masseurs in the area said they were kept on the run because of back complainte especially during the periods of heavy labor.

In the periods between these two seasons, tools were repaired, houses rebuilt, and ceremonies organized. Extra cash was earned in various ways. People kept very busy, though they did allow themselves more sleep.

The importance of women's role in agriculture is indicated by their virtual equation with men. In every step of rice-production women worked alongside men, plowing with the buffalo, planting, weeding, harvesting, repairing the dikes, hauling, etc. Only uprooting the seedlings was exclusively men's work (even this was done by women elsewhere in Thailand [Kingshill 1960:73]).

Besides the work in rice-fields, women dug and cleaned

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF FAMILY FARE IN BANG CHAN

As we turn to a detailed description of the family fare, we should like to point out that starvation was unknown in Bang Chan. Although much room remains for improvement in diet, "hollow hunger" was uncommon. In the few times when disastrous flood destroyed the year's crop, the government was able to provide enough rice so that it need not be rationed. People still ate their fill. Even floods had their advantage: one could fish out the window. That gross caloric undernutrition was rare was borne out by examination of the school children (Hauck, 1956). "On the average . . . Bang Chan children could not be considered as markedly underweight. Few were so thin that one could 'count their ribs' and still fewer would be considered plump by American standards." In a random sample of village households that included about 10% of the population, the heaviest man weighed 69 kg. (151.8 pounds) and the heaviest woman 70 kg. (154 pounds). We noted no more than half a dozen adults who appeared to be "overweight." Most were middle aged or older, and none of them did strenuous field work.

Sources of Food

Home Production, Storage and Preservation

Rice. - Rice is an essential part of any Thai meal. The majority of the rice farmers in Bang Chan had rice for home consumption milled for them at Minburi. In general, they took their own paddy to the mill, and brought the resulting milled rice home, where it was stored in a box or mat-bin. Although, according to a recent survey (Goldsen and Ralis, 1957) nearly a third of the households owned a home rice mill, undermilled or home-pounded rice was not widely used in Bang Chan. Information on this point was obtained for 333 of 336 "kitchen-unit"[1] households in the village. Of these 5 consumed home-milled rice only, 51 used home-milled rice in major part, 73 in minor part, and 199 not at all.

In households where home-milled rice was used, during June enough would be pounded to last until harvest, at which time hands were sore and bleeding from the field work and home pounding was impossible. At the time when data for the present report were being gathered, most families took paddy to the mill when water in the canal was high enough so that it could be transported by boat. If a farmer on a subsidiary

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1. In some large houses, two related family groups lived together but maintained separate kitchens.

canal misjudged his needs for milled rice and ran out, he had to mill his own paddy. Since the main canal was deepened in 1953, year-round transportation of rice by boat has been possible for many more farmers, and this may further decrease the consumption of home-milled rice.

Of 105 households which had and used a home rice mill, 99 used the polishings for feed but no family in Bang Chan used them for human food (Goldsen and Ralis, 1957). One farmer, headman of a hamlet, who lived near the main canal and the road to Minburi but who used home-milled rice, offered as the reason that the polishings were good chicken feed, and if he took rice to Minburi to be milled, the miller would keep the polishings.

As reported by Janlekha (1955) consumption of milled rice in 106 households amounted to about 285 kilograms per capita per year or 780 grams per person per day. Such "household consumption" includes "losses to pests and poultry, daily gifts to priests, contributions to temples and outlays for feasts and rites in undetermined but considerable amounts" (Sharp et al., 1953, pp. 265-266).

Flesh Foods Other than Fish. - The people of Bang Chan had a taste and appreciation for flesh food, but the production and use of meat was certainly inhibited by Buddhist tenets which prohibited the taking of life.[1] Killing of poultry, fish, etc. was tolerated among the relatively young, but was considered unsuitable to the aged who should be preoccupied with living virtuously. People felt, however, that the sin of taking life was condoned if they offered part of an animal to the priests.

Since many villagers were unwilling to slaughter buffaloes even when they become aged and useless, such animals were commonly kept until they died. Animals which had died of old age or disease were not, however, regarded by Thai Buddhists in Bang Chan as unfit for human consumption. Usually they were cut up and given to the priests. When the buffalo belonging to one family (Household 67)[2] participating in the dietary survey died, some of the meat was used fresh for curry, much

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1. Meat such as water buffalo and pork as well as fish was sold by venders. Since meat was relatively expensive and was usually used in small amounts with other foods, it was offered for sale in chunks which no longer resembled the living animal. Seeing such small quantities spared the sensibilities of the Buddhists who were thus removed a step from the killing. Actual butchering was done by Moslems or Chinese who did not object.

2. Households were identified by numbers assigned by lot.

rice land. Water-ways, however, were public areas, and any convenient wide spot might be selected as a private garden. It was marked with stakes, and was apparently not disturbed by others.

Mushroom culture as a side line activity of rice farmers developed during the period when this study was in progress. After threshing, in early 1954, two of eleven families that participated in the dietary study started raising mushrooms. Although most of these were sold, both families reported frequent inclusion of mushrooms in the family diet. One informant commented that families that planted mushrooms also ate them almost every day, and said "Adults complain that it is a wearisome food but children still like it." Mushrooms were used fried, with pork, in soup or in curry.

As with tilapia, mushroom culture appears to have been undertaken primarily to increase cash income, and was abandoned when it was no longer profitable financially (see Appendix A, pp. 101-102).

Food Purchased and Cash Expenditures for Food

Relatively few foods were purchased, but some of these, such as onion, garlic, limes, tamarind, coconut and palm sugar were so frequently used that without cash to buy them, villagers would have considered their diet monotonous. Many had their own supply of fresh and dried chilies, fishsoy, and shrimp paste, which might, however, be inadequate for their needs. Other foods not commonly produced in Bang Chan were purchased for variety.

Estimates of mean annual consumption and cost of purchased foods, for 106 households in Bang Chan are shown in Table 1.

The list of purchased foods presented by Janlekha (1955) was compiled after preliminary interviews with a number of household heads. It includes the principal food items which were commonly purchased in Bang Chan. In addition to these, the affluent household studied by Sharp et al. (1953) spent appreciable amounts for vegetables (listed as cucumbers, lettuce, cabbage, etc.) and fruit (pineapple, mangoes, melons, etc.) and small amounts for peanuts, soy sauce and vinegar sauce. Eggplant and white radish were bought by more than half the families that participated in the dietary study, and were used on 11 and 8 survey days respectively. Other vegetables and fruits, bought by one or two of the 11 families, and used on not more than 3 of the 44 survey days were: mung beans, snap beans, bean sprouts, Chinese celery, cucumber, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, sugar cane, sweet potato, taro, turmeric, (2)ma-(1)faj or rambai, Thai nutmeg, orange, pineapple, rambutan, sandorica and watermelon. Salted and pickled white radish and pickled bamboo shoots were the only

[Text continues on page 23--- Analyst]